

## IFCI Steering Committee Meeting Friday March 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, ENFO, Dublin

### AGREED MINUTE OF THE MEETING

Attendance: Sasha Bosbeer (GMIT), Pat Hennessey (IFA – observer), Mick Keane (Coillte), Declan Little (Woodlands of Ireland), Ruth McGrath (VOICE, IPCC), Anja Murray (An Taisce), Geraldine O’Sullivan (IFA), Peter Sweetman

Apologies: Fran Igoe (SRFB), Monica Muller, Tony Mannion (SIF), Pat O’Sullivan (SIF)

Facilitation: Harriet Emerson

#### **Background:**

The Report of the Delegate Meeting with FSC, presented at the Limerick Meeting in December, proposed suspension of IFCI work (bar registration of new members) for 6 months whilst processes and programmes were reviewed by professional staff appointed by FSC. However, following the resignation of Heiko Leidekker at FSC no funding to support this proposal was available. At the close of the meeting 2 stakeholders volunteered to flesh out the Delegate proposal. IFCI, in the absence of any decisions at the Limerick meeting and because stakeholders clearly wanted to move forward, met in January to consider how to address the concerns raised that led to the Delegate meeting and following it. Key decisions were taken including: 1) that IFCI needs to address how to broaden IFCI membership and, to support this, 2) that IFCI needs to agree ground rules to ensure that its business is conducted in a constructive and safe environment, and 3) the appointment of a Steering Committee member to liaise with the 2 volunteers working on the Delegate proposal. This meeting (28<sup>th</sup> March 2008) is for the Steering Committee to establish ground rules in order to accommodate all stakeholders in a safe working environment.

#### **Discussion of Ground Rules:**

It was AGREED that the Steering Committee’s Ground Rules should include the following areas:

- The purpose of the process
- Who should/may participate
- How decisions will be made
- How meetings will be conducted
- Safeguards to protect stakeholders
- The process schedule
- Facilitation issues

It was further AGREED that the Steering Committee will present its agreed Ground Rules to the full IFCI membership, in the hope that these could provide the basis for Ground Rules for the wider membership to use in all IFCI business which will be discussed and agreed at a General Meeting at a later date.

#### **AGREED Ground Rules**

The Ground Rules AGREED are as follows:

##### Purpose of the process:

- The purpose of the process is to develop a FSC-approved standard for Irish Forestry, to advance sustainable forest management in Ireland through the FSC certification process,

to engage the general public and relevant interest groups in the development of the Irish FSC standard.

Participants in the process:

- The participants include all stakeholders in the economic, social or environmental sectors.

Decision-making:

- The Steering Committee makes decisions by consensus or, failing that, by a majority of votes of the elected members within each chamber who are present. (Consensus is defined as a lack of sustained objection.)

Conduct of meetings:

- Steering Committee meetings will be notified by email to all IFCI members at least 21 days in advance, and the agenda similarly pre-circulated (14 day before the meeting).
- Decisions taken at meetings on pre-circulated agenda items will be considered agreed by IFCI.
- Issues raised under AOB are for decision at a subsequent meeting.
- Agreed decisions taken on agenda items at meetings will be written up prior to the closure of the meeting and issues raised under AOB will be noted and these will be circulated by email promptly to all members. PDFs of flipcharts of discussions at the meeting will also be posted on the website promptly.
- If SC members feel the need to consult with constituents about a pre-circulated agenda item, decisions on that item may be deferred for a maximum of one SC meeting.
- Steering Committee members represent their/ their organisation's views in meetings and will present the views of other IFCI members (not on the SC) in their Chamber where requested to do so.
- Correspondence requiring Steering Committee discussion received more than 14 days prior to a Steering Committee meeting is notified on the pre-circulated Agenda. Such correspondence arising less than 14 days before a SC meeting is brought to the meeting for decision by the Steering Committee as it sees fit.
- A record of all correspondence conducted to and from IFCI is kept and is available to IFCI members on request at the following Steering Committee meeting.
- We, or our alternate, will attend meetings in person at this stage in the process to assist in building positive relationships and working together to best effect. We will revisit use of other ways of participating in the future when better relations between participants have been established.
- At least two meetings a year will be held in locations outside Dublin with major public transport nodes to encourage participation.

Safeguards for stakeholders:

- We, and our alternate, will
  - agree to stay away from establishing hard positions and express ourselves in terms of our own/ our group's interests and needs, and the outcomes we wish to realise;
  - make a conscious and sincere effort to refrain from unproductive arguing, venting, or narrative within and outside meetings, and agree to use our time in this process to work towards what we perceive as our fairest and most constructive agreement possible;

- learn from the past but NOT dwell on things that did not work in the past, instead we will focus on the future we would like to create;
  - NOT make personal attacks or revisit previous interpersonal conflict;
  - respectfully challenge one another by asking questions for the purpose of gaining clarity and understanding;
  - speak up if something is not working in the process;
  - point out if the facilitation is not being impartial to person or neutral as to outcome;
  - turn off mobile telephones in meetings but opportunities for breaks to deal with telephone calls will be provided;
  - listen actively;
  - NOT interrupt, will speak one at a time, and make brief and concise contributions with no speeches;
  - use respectful language;
  - NOT use disrespectful body language and non-verbal communication;
  - give all participants equal time to speak;
  - recognise that, even if we do not agree with them, each participating group/ individual is entitled to their views, and respect this;
  - try to understand each other group's interests and needs;
  - speak from our own experience and position, using "I"/ "we" and NOT "they"/ "you";
  - address other stakeholder by their first/given name (not "he"/ "she");
  - NOT attribute comments/ statements within or outside meetings;
  - attend at least 1 in every 2 meetings, and attend to all other relevant business, in a timely manner, and participate fully in the process;
  - maintain participation in meetings and NOT leave the meeting repeatedly;
  - provide a synopsis of the organisation and/ or the individual to include our objective, how we operate, who we represent, and the structure of the organisation (i.e. staffing, decision-making);
  - NOT dispute SC decisions in public;
  - sign up to abide by these Ground Rules.
- On the first instance that a Ground Rule is broken the person concerned is given a verbal warning by the facilitator/ chair.
  - On the second repeated infringement of a Ground Rule, this is recorded in attributed form in the meeting minutes.
  - On the third infringement of a Ground Rule, the person is asked to leave while the meeting is suspended and this is also minuted.

#### Schedule:

- We will agree a schedule for delivery of our main objective (i.e. the Forestry Standard).

#### Facilitation:

- We will use independent facilitation in all meetings where this is possible.

*\* A matter for discussion when dealing with substantive matters in development of the Forestry Standard was noted. This involves establishing a means of assessing the relative strength of information received/use in the process.*